

Tape 20

Side A, 1/4 - 3/8

9 JUN 1980

NOTE FOR: Gary

FROM: DCI

STAT

Our friend *from California* is going to be in town about the 4th of July for about three days. Give me a tickler four or five days ahead of that in case we haven't heard from them, please. Phone number is

STAT

Cy to Gary

ret life, coupled with the ready availability of cheap vodka. When Mr B. V. Petrovsky, the Soviet Minister of Health, visited Geneva, he even admitted to a closed session of Soviet officials at WHO that if alcoholism continued to spread at its present rate in Russia, it would eventually lead to "the degeneration of the nation".

Whereas in the past, says Mr Dzhirkvelov, ordinary Russians complained privately about economic decay and political repression, nowadays more and more members of the ruling elite itself are voicing their concern. These, he says, include officers of both the Army and the KGB, "which after all are composed of people, many of whom understand what is going on only too well". Only the pinnacle of power is totally isolated from reality.

"It is not surprising if Mr Brezhnev and his colleagues believe in the abundance of Communist society, since they live in it, even if nobody else does. So, will some new leadership take the radical, rational measures Mr Dzhirkvelov believes necessary, including a degree of democratization? Mr Dzhirkvelov himself is not optimistic. If the Kremlin tightens up still further, he says, something could well crack; but if it allows liberalization, that too would lead to an "unpredictable explosion". Many Russians, he says, are fearfully asking themselves what will happen next. "The one certainty," Mr Dzhirkvelov concludes, "is that something must happen. We cannot go on as we are for much longer."

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